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Book Reviews

The Undiscovered Christ: A Review of Recent Developments in the Christian Approach to the Hindu: by MARCUS BRAYBROOKE. C.L.S. for C.I.S.R.S., Madras and Bangalore, 1973. Pp. 119. Price Rs 6.

During the last 25 years, the relationship of Christianity to the other world religions, Hinduism especially, has become a subject of intense reflection for both Protestant and Catholic thinkers in India. Against a background of attitudes which remain largely conservative, a whole gamut of new conceptions characterized by sympathy, deeper appreciation, mutual inclusiveness, and opening up the dialogical approach has appeared and changed the whole climate of our relations with members of other faiths in this land. The present work provides, in spite of its shortness, a masterful survey of these developments which it also assesses critically. As a survey, it is remarkably complete, objective and discerning, it sets out clearly the significant issues and the rising trends. As an assessment, it allies open-mindedness with theological firmness to point out the promising insights of the writers it reviews and also to question the too daring statements of some or to ask for needed clarifications. The reviewer's outline of this booklet is offered here as a mere appetizer for a more profitable reading.

P. D. Devanandan appears more and more as the inspirer in Protestant circles of the new theological vision which slowly displaced Kraemer's doctrine of 'discontinuity' whose influence had dominated the Tambaram Conference. For him the 'new creation' inaugurated by Christ has cosmic dimensions whose politico-social implications have to be proclaimed and made actual through our Christian witness. Secularization as a liberating process launched by Christ will help Hindus to re-define the very nature of religion. The Hindu and Christian aspiration towards a single world-religion is not to be fulfilled through 'radical displacement' or even 'synthesis' but, as suggested by Hocking, through 'reconception': each religion will expand and, by including aspects of other religions, broaden its own understanding of truth. Reconception is already at work in renaissance Hinduism and this is a sign that Christ is hiddenly active there, making all things new. Thus understood, reconception opens the door for a reintroduction of the concept of 'fulfilment' and it recognises the reality of differences which will, in all likelihood, persist. As to the theological weaknesses which still inhere in renaissance Hinduism, e.g., regarding divine personality, creation, etc., and the misunderstandings about Christianity, the practice of dialogue will help much to clear them. Evangelical proclamation is still necessary for we must cooperate in God's new creation by announcing Christ in terms meaningful to our fellow countrymen.

In the wake of Devanandan's bold sailing a number of conferences have met to discuss the Christian attitude to other religions. Their statements reveal the growth of the new trend: There are signs of God's activity in non-Christian religions where, however, the forms of man's quest are entangled in man's rebellion; yet, in Christian-Hindu dialogue, we have much, not only to give, but to receive from our Hindu friends (Nagpur, 1958). A new emphasis is laid in all religions on the fact of our common humanity; God's forbearance reaches all mankind because of his plan of salvation; some would even speak of His redemptive activity even within other faiths (World Council of Churches and International Missionary Council, 1961). Not religion in the Barthian sense but our common humanity is the meeting place of our dialogical encounter; the latter is characterised by the Universality of the Gospel, the Mutuality of honest and loving openness, and the Finality of Christ who alone is Lord; it is not acceptable that it should compromise in any way this uniqueness of Christ (East Asia Christian Conference, 1964). We should discern Christ's redemptive action also outside the organised Church, for he works where he wills, but we should not betray our faith in his uniqueness, (Nasrapur, 1966). All mankind is caught up in one universal history. Secularization increases the need and opportunity for dialogue. Dialogue itself will enlighten us regarding the place held by other religious traditions in God's purpose, a question about which participants are still divided (Kandy, 1967).

The Bombay Consultation which gathered both Protestants and Catholics in 1969 was positively centred on dialogue. Dialogue stems from a profound recognition of the mutuality of our common life. It finds its deepest foundation in the dialogue which God has instituted with mankind in Jesus Christ. It is quite distinct from evangelization and is an end in itself. It is defined as a collaboration of persons based upon attitudes of mutual acceptance and respect for each other's integrity and a shared desire for growth in truth. It is animated by a hope for development of one's present commitment and for a breakthrough into a yet deeper commitment. Honesty demands that one's own commitment and convictions be not concealed. Openness demands that each partner bring forth his own experience of truth in the awareness that it is imperfect and the expectation that it will be corrected and enriched by the others (Bombay, 1969).

The Roman Catholic contribution is made to begin in a special way with J. A. Cuttat. He advocated dialogue first of all as an encounter of persons already committed to a creed. He wished them never to ignore the religious differences between the metaphysical tradition of the Orient and the monotheistic revelation which sees the world as the creation of a Personal Being. He thought that the first cannot subordinate the second without depriving it of its essential features—personal transcendency, gratuitousness of Grace, supreme value of Love—whereas the monotheistic revelation is capable of embracing the Eastern perspective in such a way that the true essence of the latter is not only preserved but actually heightened. The basis of his claim is that the extreme interiority of the Spirit culminates in

the extreme transcendency of the Creator. But he believed that Christianity can recover its interiority from contact with the East and thus meet those of other faiths in depth: 'The more deeply I go into my own religion the more I become capable of penetrating and assimilating the core, the really positive content, of other religious perspectives'.

The Jesuit scholars who wrote *Religious Hinduism*, published first in monthly letters (1957-59), then in book form (1964), had already taken the dialogical stand soon to be sanctioned by Vatican II. After dismissing the syncretism of the indifferentist and the unopenness of the fanatic, Fr. Fallon, their introducer, recalls that supernatural faith is a divine gift not confined to Christians. In the other religions, a Christian discovers many evidences of the age-long work of grace in the hearts of men, besides much that is sound and true on the natural plane of reason. All must be gathered and consummated in Christ through a process of death and rebirth. Christ who is prefigured in many ways in the traditions of the non-Christians reaches them *not in spite of* their non-Christian religions but by using, it would seem, the very elements of truth and goodness that are present in these religions. For many a non-Christian his religion appears to be the means and the way which God's grace uses to reach him in his present situation. Yet, non-Christian lives and aspirations, however noble, remain incomplete until fulfilled in Christ.

On the occasion of the International Eucharistic Congress of Bombay in November 1964, a theological conference took place whose papers have been published in another significant book entitled, *Christian Revelation and World Religions*. The Conference's conclusions contain assertions of vast relevance: The one salvific plan of God, which embraces the whole of mankind, includes all the world religions. The truth these contain comes from God but it needs to be liberated by Christ from entanglement in error and sin. Every man's commitment to God takes place under the inner attraction of the Holy Spirit in the context of various social, cultural and religious influences. The non-Christian religions ought to be viewed as the historical way to God for their follower in the expectation of the mystery of death and life made manifest in Jesus. Mission is the humble offering of God's saving truth and love in Christ to free human beings.

Fr Neuner, the editor, explains on his own that the world religions are ambiguous. Their truth which comes from God is not seldom distorted by human sin and error. Yet, God uses them in the fulfilment of his will of salvation which extends to all men. We must be aware that there is a difference between the intimate religious attitude of people and their philosophical ideas; the former is deeper and closer to God's guidance. Religions other than Christianity are pre-Christian rather than non-Christian. Despite the missionaries' effort, their adherents seldom encounter Christ in an adequate way. The task of the Church is to offer Christ so that in God's good time the other religions may die and rise to fulfilment. All ideas of missionary 'conquest' are abandoned and respect for human freedom is complete. After reporting this, M. Braybrooke remarks: 'What is missing perhaps is a sense of the ambiguity of Christianity itself'.

For Dom Bede Griffiths, a contributor, there is surely an element of genuine supernatural revelation in all the great religious traditions. All men were included in God's covenant with Adam and Noah. Man is saved by his response to the call of grace which comes to every one secretly in every religious or irreligious state. The real point of our meeting with Hindus must be in mystical experience, in union with God—beyond images and concepts—in the ground of the soul. We have to show the Hindu in the light of our faith that in this ultimate experience the world and the soul are not lost, nor is the personal being of God absorbed in the impersonal Godhead. As to Christ, so long as his historicity is not accepted, he cannot have a true birth in the Indian soul. What the Christian can learn from the Hindu is, first of all, interiority and the sense of symbolism and of the sacred, then, further, the theory and practice of non-violence.

Fr R. Panikkar, in his widely-read *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* (1964), tries to show that Hinduism and Christianity can only meet in Christ if they meet at all. Moreover, Christ is already in Hinduism in so far as Hinduism is a true religion. He is there, however, in his cosmic action but not yet in his concrete and historic dimension. Thus his whole face is not yet unveiled there and Hinduism is not yet his spouse. The Christian must conceive Hinduism as incorporated into the universal economy of salvation through Christ and discover in it a kind of Christianity in potency but which has still to die and rise again in Christ. Through this radical change Hinduism will attain a better form because of its elevation into a higher sphere.

Further, in his article *Christianity and World Religions*, Panikkar makes clear his belief that these religions are for their adherents the ordinary way towards salvation (though some of their forms may be false or degenerate) but he also recalls that religions do not save through their own power: it is the Lord himself who saves. Faith, as a constitutive human dimension is the existential openness of man towards the not-yet.

Panikkar makes a tantalizing distinction between 'Jesus is the Lord' and 'The Lord is Jesus'. Christ the Lord, he says, stands for the *universal principle*, the ultimate pivot of everything. As to the manifestation of the Lord in Jesus, it was *sui generis*, but it is wrong to say that the Lord is only in Jesus. Some of the questions which such a statement raises are dealt with in his *The Trinity and World Religions*. Here he explains that 'Christ' is an ambiguous term. It may be identified with the Logos or with Jesus. His own suggestion is to use the word 'Lord' for that Principle, Being, Logos or Christ which other religious traditions call by a variety of names. Of this Lord Christians can claim no monopoly. 'The reason', he writes, 'why I persist in calling it Christ is that it seems to me that phenomenologically Christ presents the fundamental characteristics of the mediator between divine and cosmic, eternal and temporal, etc., which other religions call *Ishvara*, *Tathāgata* or even Jahweh, Allah and so on'.

As to the Church, her claim is not that she is *the* religion for the whole of mankind but that she is the place where Christ is fully revealed, the end and plenitude of every religion.

In the writings of K. Klostermaier, the emphasis is on the actuality of dialogue rather than on its theory. His paper *Dialogue—The Work of God*, based on his own experience, presents dialogue as an experience in which the Christian feels the need for a *metanoia* in depth and the non-Christian is also challenged by God through the feeling of God's personal concern for each individual. In true dialogue Christ becomes manifest as the door to God. Dialogue depends on God drawing people to himself and to one another. It is an end in itself. In his book *Hindu and Christian in Vrindāban*, he again notes that dialogue challenges both partners out of the security of the very prisons which their philosophy and theology have built for them, and confronts them with reality, with truth. In a pamphlet called *Kristvidyā*, he has tried to sketch an Indian Christology, rightly convinced that Christ is to be fully and really 'incarnated' in the culture and categories of India, and that it is not possible to carry him into them *from without*. Christ comes to India not as a stranger smuggled in from outside but he comes there unto his own—and not from Europe but directly from the Father.

Another writer, Fr J. B. Chethimattam, in his book *Dialogue in Indian Tradition*, puts the emphasis on co-operation in facing the problems of the secular world rather than on the depth of religious experience.

The dialogical approach is now in the ascendant, but there is no lack of more conservative minds. Bishop Kulandran, for instance, continues to hold the Kraemerian view that each religion is a whole with a distinct message. He finds that even the most developed Hindu ideas of grace are inadequate as a basis for interpreting the Christian doctrine. Hinduism lacks the sense of God's utter righteousness and of man's complete sinfulness. Another valuable Protestant scholar, B. Paradkar, defends the need for Gospel proclamation whose place must not be usurped by dialogue. He also insists that the coming of Christ involves confrontation and choice.

Among the partisans of dialogue, one question raised concerns the nature of its basis. D. Scott sees it in our common humanity. For E. V. Mathew, no dialogue is profitable if it is not centred round, arising from, and conditioned by hard terrestrial realities of human situations; he has no patience with mysticism. K. Baago used to say that secularization will be the force that brings about a meaningful and creative relationship between religions. It will make it easier to leave Christianity (the organized religion) and go inside Hinduism or Buddhism, accepting them in so far as they do not conflict with Christ and regarding them as the presupposition and the framework of the Christian Gospel in Asia. We ought to accept these religions as our own, letting the Gospel purify them from within. M. Sunder Rao would rather distinguish sharply between religious experience, on which level there is a large amount of convergences of Christianity and Hinduism, and its interpretation which is the locus of divergent courses.

C. Murray Rogers sees the basis of dialogue in the fact that all men are, not only created by God, but redeemed by Christ and sustained by the Holy Spirit. Whatever we may dialogue about, the Living

God will be there ahead of us. For the regretted Swami Abhishiktananda (Dom Le Saux,) dialogue must be prayerful. Christians meditating with Hindus on passages from the Upanishads and the Bible rediscover in themselves the secret place of the rishis' experience and then under the inspiration of the Spirit and by an existential process, wholly personal to each, allow the Christian expression and Trinitarian culmination of this experience to find its full development in them. This may demand an epochê, a temporary putting aside, of the conceptual expression of our faith. But the Lord is already in India. Our role is to help the holy seed which he has sown there to germinate in the very earth in which he has planted it, i.e., in the ground of interiority which is his special gift to India. By entering the Hindu experience we shall discover Christ as the fulfilment of Hindu aspirations.

Dhanjibhai Fakirbhai, a convert to Protestant Christianity, has tried rather successfully to interpret the Gospel in the devotional terms of Hinduism in his *Khrista-Gitâ* and *Khristopanishad*. For him and for S. Jesudason and R. C. Das, such necessary tasks should not obfuscate the uniqueness of Christ. His uniqueness is genuine supremacy but inclusive, comprehensive and synthetic. He does not deny the past, he fulfils it.

Philosophical dialogue comprises a rich field of studies. Two authors in particular should be mentioned for their valuable criticisms of Radhakrishnan's views on the relationship between the great religions: D. G. Moses in his *Religious Truth and the Relation between Religions* and S. Singh in his *Preface to Personality*. Another writer, N. Minz, has made a creative contribution to the theology of dialogue with his book, *Mahâtma Gandhi and Hindu-Christian Dialogue*.

Finally, two theologians are to be mentioned, R. Boyd for his *Introduction to Indian Christian Theology* and S. J. Samartha for his *Hindus vor dem universalen Christus*. These books deserve to be reviewed on their own.

The fecundity of Christian thinking regarding all these questions is shown by the fact that since the recent publication of the book here reviewed, other important works have seen the light. Among them, the collection of papers of the International Theological Seminar of Nagpur is probably the most important since many of its contributors proceed even further along the pathways opened up by the men whose thinking has been reported here.

Poona

R. DE SMET, S.J.

Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate; edited by HANS-WERNER BARTSCH (trans. H. FULLER), S.P.C.K. 1972. Pp. 364. Price £ 2.75.

Within the covers of this book are gathered the two volumes of the English translation of *Kerygma und Mythos*, first published in 1953 and 1962 respectively. A re-reading of the essays now prompts various reflections. (1) The book is already somewhat dated: even by the time the second volume was published in English, the hermeneutical debate had moved on to wider issues of Christian faith

and history, especially the 'new quest of the historical Jesus'. (2) It shows in large measure how a debate should not be conducted. Apart from the mischievous (and amusing) contributions of Karl Barth and Austin Farrer (where one is tempted to believe the misunderstandings were deliberate), many of the essays criticise a point of view they have failed to understand. The lack of precision in the definition of myth, at least in Bultmann's original essay, was partly to blame here. Mythology 'is the use of imagery to express the otherworldly in terms of this world and the divine in terms of human life, the other side in terms of this side' (vol. 1, p. 10). But this would include all pictorial, analogical and symbolical speech and would mean that *all* utterance about God is irreducibly mythological, in which case (as Ronald Hepburn pointed out) demythologizing would become logically impossible. Again, the misunderstandings on both sides about subjective and objective truth were surely largely avoidable. By objective, Bultmann and his supporters meant 'verifiable by observation as opposed to accessible to faith alone', while the orthodox critics meant 'outside of and anterior to acceptance by the believer' (the words are R. H. Fuller's). Yet in essay after essay the writers tilt against imaginary opponents.

But the book has more positive values as well. (1) The complaint was heard even then that existentialist re-interpretation of the Gospel, while meaningful to some, is bound to be of very limited appeal: 'say one in five thousand' (Farrer); 'It is simply a way in which certain men, perhaps many, certainly not all men recognise themselves' (Jaspers); 'much of (existentialism) has never entered the consciousness of more than a tiny fraction of mankind, and certainly not into that vast number whose active lives are most beneficial to their fellows' (J. S. Bezzant in a review of vol. 1). After the lapse of a few years, these remarks appear in retrospect to be amply justified. (2) Karl Jaspers complains that Bultmann's retention of the unique act of God in Jesus Christ shows him up in his true colours—as orthodox and illiberal! It sounds unnecessarily pejorative, but looking back across the secular theology and 'death of God' theology of the 60s, one is forced to ask with more urgency whether this is not one trace of myth which Bultmann was illogically unwilling to remove (especially if his original definition was to stand)—whether demythologizing can stop short of dekerygmatising. (It is unfortunate, in this connection, that Fritz Buri's 'Entmythologisierung oder Entkerygmatisierung der Theologie', which appeared in vol. 2 of the German edition, was not included in the English edition.) (3) There also echoes through the book the question, couched in many different forms, 'Is this Christian understanding of human existence necessarily bound to the person of Jesus Christ, or can it be detached from him?' (Schumann). This question is still with us as much as ever. One only needs to see, for example, the varied reactions to H. A. Williams' *The True Resurrection*, a book which, while not technically existentialist, explores existential meaning rather than historical roots, to see that it is little, if any, nearer a solution.

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Indian Voices in To-day's Theological Debate: ed. H. BURKLE and W. M. W. ROTH, L.P.H.—I.S.P.C.K.—C.L.S., 1972. Pp. 224. Paperback. Rs 15, Hardcover Rs 20.

The eleven essays in *Indian Voices in Today's Theological Debate* all deal with one or other of the two fundamental issues which theologians face today: in what way can Christ be called unique? What has God been doing down the centuries in other religious traditions, and what is he doing in the upheavals of our own day? These questions are faced in a spirit of balanced theological independence, which, while it rejects western tutelage, is willing to learn from and with western theologians.

The first five essays deal with the first question. In 'The Jesus of History: an Appraisal from India', J. C. Hindley points out that Indian theologians have often appealed to the Jesus of history behind the doctrinal accretions of western theology. For that very reason the continuing western debate about the historical Jesus is important for them. He observes that Hindu thinkers have never had any real difficulty in accepting the divinity of Christ in their own terms: 'Indeed it is only those whose vision is limited to the (allegedly) Semitic view of God's "otherness" who could find any difficulty in believing this. . . on the other hand the Hindu finds the Christian claim that only in Jesus of Nazareth is the incarnation of God to be found, completely incomprehensible'. This leads Hindley to pose the first of our fundamental questions: 'In what way can a special position for Jesus be established?' He suggests two main avenues of approach. First, there is in India 'great need for clearer historical knowledge of the kind of person Jesus was, and the kind of revelation he embodied'. It is simply not good enough for a Vivekananda to assert: 'The essential teaching of Jesus has never been understood in the West'. Second, 'our reconstruction of the history of Jesus must be set within its Jewish context and . . . the Jewish doctrine of God which our Lord inherited must be spelt out explicitly'. This is well said, and it implies a much more serious reckoning with the Old Testament than the church in India or anywhere else has yet undertaken.

As in his more recent book, R.H.S. Boyd shows in his article in the present volume that there has already been a massive attempt to explain Christ and the Christian experience in terms drawn from distinctive Indian schools of thought. He gives a high place to Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya—a thinker who is at last coming into his own. He was 'one of the first since de Nobili to dare to think that Christianity could have any kind of fruitful relationship with Shankara's *advaita* philosophy'. Bishop Appasamy has tried to relate Christian faith to the personalist philosophy of Ramanuja, and here Boyd urges that the western church should take much more seriously than it has yet done the writings of Indian Christian saints, poets, and mystics. He also makes the now familiar comparison between Chenchiah and de Chardin.

East and West not only think different thoughts, they also think in different ways. W.M.W. Roth claims that the West tends to be ana-

lytic and India synthetic in its approach. From his experience in theological education he asks whether this does not explain why Indian students, often naively fundamentalist, seem 'unwilling to read the biblical texts discerningly, to ask questions, to analyse'. Does not this difference also help us to understand why Hindus are so often prepared to make sweeping statements like that of Vivekananda, quoted above? This has important implications for dialogue.

Roth also pleads that Christians should re-examine their assumption that their own faith is superior to Hinduism on the grounds that it is historical. Here he is on less certain ground. The word history is used in several essays in this book but nowhere is it defined. There is no reference to Alan Richardson's important book *History Sacred and Profane* which clarifies the issues involved.

In 'Rediscovering the Meaning of the Symbol' John G. Arapura takes the question of different thought patterns a stage further. 'Western logic, science, art and theology are essentially processes as well as products of relentless and insistent demythologisation'. Barth and Bultmann receive some heavy criticism and Tillich some qualified praise. Tillich gives a place to symbolism in his thought but he does not go far enough, for he speaks only of isolated religious symbols but has not grappled with the problem of symbolic structure as a whole. Arapura sees this structure in the Vedantic concept of *maya*. In these terms neither Word (Barth) nor History (Bultmann) is ultimate for 'everywhere the real principle of anything is in the realm that transcends it'. Theology thus needs to discover the roots of speech in silence itself. This again raises the question of what we mean by history which Arapura seems to understand in a narrowly positivist sense. Yet his argument cannot be ignored and as he himself points out it leads straight into the question of a theology of language. This too is an area which needs further exploration.

At this point we can appropriately turn to Surjit Singh's article 'Ontology and Personalism'. To anyone without a philosophical background this is not easy reading. Surjit Singh makes two main observations. In the West theologians and philosophers are more open to each others' claims than they used to be, thanks among others to Tillich. Then 'the claims of the metaphysical have to be pressed against western thought and correspondingly the claims of the personal have to be pressed against the neo-Sankarite thought'. Like Arapura his approval of Tillich is qualified: 'His thought will establish a sensitive relationship with the Indian outlook, will be welcomed; but it will be too easily assimilated'.

A British theologian, Charles Raven, once described the period of European theology from the end of the first world war till after the end of the second as the great blight when the Protestant world enthroned Karl Barth and the Catholic world exiled de Chardin. The evidence of these essays suggests that most of their writers would endorse that judgement from the context of India—to which the blight also penetrated. They would find many allies among theologians of the British tradition—William Temple, L. S. Thornton, John Oman, Raven himself, and more recently, David Jenkins,

Kenneth Cragg and J. V. Taylor. Beside some of these names Tillich's stature looks less impressive.

With one exception, of which more later, the last six essays deal with the second of our two fundamental questions. What has God been doing down the centuries in other religious traditions, and what is he doing in the upheavals of our own day? J. R. Chandran justly states that the authoritarian impress of western theology in India 'prevented the development of a really powerful indigenous theology', led to the suppression of experiments and to the condemnation of indigenous culture. More recent developments give greater grounds for hopefulness.

Herbert Jai Singh looks at the question from a rather different perspective. He asks for a theology of fragments rather than of systems, of action rather than abstractions. Much traditional theology has confined itself to a narrow field and has thus abandoned the world to principalities and powers. The church should immerse itself in the world's problems. A. F. Thompson agrees, and in particular he wants a theology of society. Gandhi, Marxism, and Dr Radhakrishnan have all sought to interpret social change and to find within it a place for sacrificial service. On the Christian side M. M. Thomas and Paul Devanandan have been the pioneers in this field.

R. W. Taylor pursues the same theme: 'The insight that Christ is active outside the confines of the Christian church, the Christian community, is at the heart of some of the most stimulating thinking being done in India today'. Taylor sees this thinking as being in part a recovery of certain elements in the Gospel, and in part a reaction against pietistic individualism, certain brands of western theology (the great blight again) and the relative isolation of the Christian community in India. He believes that in the Indian context we should speak of Christ rather than God or the Spirit as being active outside the church. In this he is supported by H. Bürkle in the last essay—which is unhappily marred by some poor translation from the original German. Bürkle comments at length on a paper delivered at the World Council of Churches conference at New Delhi in 1961 on Colossians 1: 15-20. He also develops D. T. Niles' theme of the 'previousness' of Christ in every situation.

The second group of essays are slighter in substance than the first. This in part reflects the fact that much that was new when the book was first published in German in 1966 is now familiar. The debate has moved on since then. Instead of simply speaking of Christ at work outside the church, do we not need to look afresh at the whole biblical revelation, seeing it not as an exception but rather as a pattern? This means that we must look again at the church itself. Also, while these essays show a welcome reaction against the individualism of the past and a concern for society as a whole one misses any consideration of conversion and baptism—yet one should not expect one book to deal with all subjects and these two have been discussed in *Religion and Society* in recent years. Could not these two issues be the point at which conservative evangelicals might be encouraged to make their much-needed contribution to the contemporary debate?

The essay by Klaus Klostermeier stands rather apart from the others. He writes about *sanyasa*, which for all its contemporary decay as a pattern of life still at its best springs from 'the great desire to find and to be one's true self'. Klostermeier makes some perceptive comments on past and present Christian *ashrams* in India, and he follows this with a fascinating account of *sanyasa* as it is practised today. He ends by putting the challenge of developing its inward life with which the *sanyasa* ideal presents the church. This essay is full of good things and bears much pondering.

The book originally appeared in German in 1966. It is a pity that it was not until 1972 that this English edition appeared. Nonetheless it still remains an important contribution to the contemporary theological debate—and not just in India.

Varanasi

R. H. HOOKER

Who is Jesus Christ? Edited T. DAYANANDAN FRANCIS. C.L.S. for Tamil Theological Book Club, Madras 1973. Pp. 255. Price Rs 10.

This is an important book, containing papers on Indian and Western Christology first read at a seminar on Christology at Arasaradi in July 1972 under the auspices of the Tamil Theological Book Club and Tamilnad Theological Seminary. The language and style are modern and attractive, and the book is something of a landmark in Tamil theological literature, and a valuable contribution to the Tamil Church.

We meet first the Christology in the writings of well-known contemporary theologians such as Bonhoeffer, Bultmann, Tillich, Rahner, Pannenberg, De Chardin, Barth and Knox. The new trends and emphasis are well brought out, including the significance of Jesus' humanity for 'secular' man. Western theologians often tend to emphasize man's experience at the cost of God's action in history. Here the Biblical emphasis on God's action is noticeably watered down.

Next we find six essays dealing with the work of Indian scholars as they interpret the Gospel of Christ to India. Christology in the writings of Brahmabandav Upadhyaya, Sunder Singh, Chakkarai, Chenchiah, Appasamy and Panikkar is examined in the first paper; and a second deals with Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Keshub Chandra Sen. The former has been called 'the prophet of Indian nationalism and the pioneer of liberal reform in Hindu religion and society'. Roy saw the precepts of Jesus not only as the true source of peace and happiness, but also as a basis for the uplift of India. He had a great esteem for Jesus; but he did not accept the teaching of the Church that in Christ God became man. Keshub Chandra Sen, too, did not join any Christian Church, but he realised the creative power of Christianity in world civilisation and hoped that the power of Christ would drive away centuries-old errors and superstitions from India. Christ was, to him, the embodiment of self-sacrifice which India needed. In his Address, 'India asks: Who is Christ?' he told his

audience, 'Say unto Christ, as unto your best friend—Welcome! I say emphatically and I say before you all, that Christ is already present in you. He is present in you even when you are unconscious of his presence. . . . For Christ is the light that lightens every man that comes into the world'. Roy and Sen speak for many Indians; but Dr S. Radhakrishnan said of Christ, 'my heart longs but my head hesitates'—there is need to clarify the truth of Jesus for those who, like Radhakrishnan, have intellectual questions about the basis of Christianity.

Christology in the works of Swami Akilander, M. M. Thomas and Klostermeier follows next. Akilander said, 'If I . . . have to worship Jesus of Nazareth, there is only one way left to me, that is to worship Him as God and nothing else'. He spoke of Jesus as a Yogi, and described Yoga as the peace that passed all understanding.

Direct and indirect references to Christ in the English literature of contemporary India are brought out in an interesting article. A survey of such literature reveals the fact that Christians are not making a significant contribution to the welfare of Indian society in terms which are identified and recognised by that society. Literary men and novelists dream of a better society—but it is to the human agencies that they look.

A further section of essays covers such topics as the writings of Krishna Pillai, Christian poets of India, Revival Songs, Christ in Tirumoolai Thirumanthiram, and 'Christ and E.V.R.' E. V. Ramasamy Naicker (affectionately called E.V.R. by his admirers) was the great social reformer of South India, and champion of the underdog. He stood for social justice and equality, and self-respect was his watchword. He wanted the common man, victim of exploitation in the name of Hindu religion, to live with dignity and self-respect. The author of the essay on E.V.R. suggests that Christ would be more concerned with E.V.R.'s work than with those of us who talk of Christological issues. Perhaps this is true; but perhaps it is also true that social reformers need God's power and grace and love, and purity in personal life, if they are to be effective instruments of social change. (The life of Martin Luther King is a case in point.)

Tirunelveli

RATNAM JOSEPH

Present Day Challenges to Religion: Edited by THOMAS PAUL. Pontifical Institute of Theology and Philosophy, Alwaye, 1973. Pp. 122. Price Rs 5.

Modern Messianic Movements as a Theological and Missionary Challenge: by GOTTFRIED OOSTERWAL. Institute of Mennonite Studies, Indiana, 1973. Pp. 55. Price \$ 1.

The first of these books is based on talks and discussions at a symposium held under the auspices of Mathavan Chinthayam. It reflects the thoughts and opinions of a widely representative spectrum of Indian Society. The Foreword is written by the President of the

Institute, and the key-note address was given by the Chairman of the University Grants Commission.

The Introduction written by the Editor speaks of the present age as a 'challenging Era' with its call to 'consolidate the patrimony of the past, solve the problems of today, and accept the challenges of tomorrow'. The Editor then mentions six major challenges, the discussion of which forms the main contents of the symposium, namely modernist movements for a just society, the drive for technological progress, contests of youth, fellowship in a pluralistic society, secularization, and the changing approach to morality.

The key-note address by Dr George Jacob, entitled 'To Rise Above the Challenges', speaks of the swift changes in various aspects of life taking place under a kind of 'time compression'. The most serious consequence of these changes is 'the devaluation of the past'. In countries like India which have a 'relaxed culture', they also have a confusing and unhinging effect. What is needed here is not a hectic reaction but a realistic and relaxed response rooted in religious faith. Only thus will it be possible 'to rise above the challenges'. This is a point to be noted and deeply pondered.

No comments are called for by the various Chapters because they deal with topics which have been discussed threadbare for a generation or more. However, the chapter on 'Fellowship in a Pluralistic Society' by Professor Paul Verghese is the most challenging presentation both to Christian Theology and Christian Mission. It will therefore be useful to draw attention to a few of the important points made by him.

One of the first things that he points out is the cramping and limiting effect of the traditional concept of God's grace which is applied to redemption and does not take account of the grace of God as 'the ground of all existing realities'. 'As a participant in the reality of creation', he says, 'I am a son of Grace, existing by the grace of God. Everything else too exists by the grace of God. Therefore I have a Koinonia with all that exists'.

Verghese bases his understanding of pluralism on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. 'The giving of different gifts to different people and putting them in relationship with one another is the work of the Holy Spirit'. He goes on to affirm that pluralism is therefore not merely co-existence but dialogue, which he calls, 'one of the correlates of pluralism'. He moves on to assert that 'as humanity is one by creation, so it is by the death of Christ'. Atonement therefore from this point of view hallows pluralism and transcends the 'ecumenical cordiality' so characteristic of today.

All this argument Verghese brings to bear on the theory and practice of Christian mission, and is critical of the stance which missionaries in general have taken in facing men of other faiths or no faith. He pleads that 'in India the most important thing today is to develop a cadre of working together for national welfare in which pluralism becomes a reality of life'.

We should be thankful to Paul Verghese for opening a new line of approach to our fellow Indians, girded by Christian doctrines of Creation, Redemption and Sanctification, in a spirit of give and take which is the essence of fellowship in a pluralistic society. 'It is not in an ecumenical ambient but in a Gospel context that pluralism has to make its take-off'.

Oosterwal's well documented brochure by a scholar with a considerable experience of missionary work and theological teaching, is a timely and critical assessment of modern Messianic movements, which have today assumed international and ecumenical dimensions. As the author says, 'There is hardly a region in the world that in the last two or three decennia has not given birth to a new religious movement or that has not seen the sudden revival of some old messianic belief'.

Oosterwal characterises these movements, more than 6,000 of which exist in Africa alone, as possessing more or less these common features—'prophets and charismatic leaders, a crisis situation, ecstatic tendencies, a special revelation and a movement that suddenly arises and totally absorbs its adherents, giving them a whole new life-style, a new ethos, a new morality, and often leading to great reforms, even revolution'. The 'creative' centre of these movements, according to the author, is 'eschatology'. In terms of their origin, he groups them under three categories—'naturalistic', which are indigenous, 'importation movements', which are completely new to the local culture, and 'acculturative and syncretistic', which represents a combination of the old and the new. He analyses the factors which caused such movements to arise, such as economic and colonial oppression, western intellectualism and traditional missionary methods. But he locates the impulse for these movements in deep God-consciousness and maintains that 'the messianic movements are a chapter in the *theologia religionum*, probably its most challenging, but certainly its most urgent one'.

Raising the question as to why theological reflection and the missionary movements have not shown comparable results, Oosterwal mentions intimate relationship with God, deep fellowship and a message of hope and assurance, which are so characteristic of the messianic movements but apparently lacking in theological discussions and missionary methods. He also emphasises the essentially lay character of these movements which challenge the 'clericalised churches'. He stresses the fact that Christianity itself at its beginning was a genuine messianic movement, and is in some way responsible for evoking this response.

The author does not hesitate to criticise these movements from the angle of the Christo-centric faith from which they seem to depart in so many respects, particularly in giving a secondary or even marginal place to Jesus Christ, the true Messiah. But he is quick to point out that the Christian Churches are no less guilty of making 'Truth, and even Jesus Christ, often appear only at the periphery, either in our thinking or in our actions'.

Oosterwal sums up his conclusion by calling the modern messianic movements '*preparatio evangelica*', '*vehiculum evangelicum*' and '*impedimentum evangelicum*'.

This little book is a refreshing challenge to much of our theological reflection and certainly to the present day missionary methods. It is hoped that it will lead the Christian readers to critical self-examination.

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The Orthodox Church in India: Vol. I, by DAVID DANIEL, New Delhi, 1972. Pp. XIII-184. Price Rs 10.

The first volume of this diptych on the Orthodox Church of India is divided into fifteen chapters and four appendices. It concludes with a selective bibliography and chronology of events. No index of names is provided. Eight illustrations, mostly portraits, and a map of Kerala complete the work.

The author's attempt is praiseworthy, since he wants to help the normally educated reader to acquire a basic knowledge of the history and present state of his Church. However it is treated exclusively from the viewpoint not only of the Syrian Orthodox Church of India—often known as Jacobite—but even of her fairly recent history. It means that there is found, consciously or not, much projection into the past of what has developed in modern times.

Understandably enough such an approach can hardly be called objective, if one cares to accept the standards of historical criticism. A kind of 'myth', i.e., the perpetual West Syrian Orthodoxy of the Thomas Christians, cannot but lead the writer to much anachronism, if not to downright distortions. History and legend are not easy bedfellows; above all history should not be mixed freely with 'beliefs' and 'traditions' if accepted without more ado. Unfortunately legends and more than doubtful traditions die hard.

A few detailed remarks are called for. P. 1, the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church is made to appear as *the* Church founded by St Thomas, whereas there are at least five Churches in India which make the same claim. Hence (pp. 14 and 128) who can really pretend to be, if at all, the present day 'successor' of Thomas? From p. 5 to p. 59 much confusion is created of the various Syriac traditions. For example, how can it be said that 'the Nestorians adopted the name of the Chaldaean Church and raised their chief Pontiff to the status of PATRIARCH OF BABYLON'? Even if Firth's *Introduction to Indian Church History* is quoted as an authority, this statement is wrong on three counts: the term 'Chaldaean' became synonymous with the ex-Nestorians who had joined the Roman communion only since the 17th-18th centuries; in A.D. 490 their existing *catholicos* was not raised to the patriarchal status, because he did not need it; the title of 'patriarch of Babylon' is a 19th century introduction for the use of the Chaldaean (Catholic) patriarch in Mesopotamia. P. 33, it is stated

that 'Mar Joseph, Mar Sabrisho and Mar Aphrod came to Malabar with the blessing of the Orthodox Catholicos of Persia'. The 'Mar Joseph' here mentioned is supposed to have been a metropolitan of Edessa, though there is no room for him in the episcopal succession of that city in the 4th century, the time when Mar Joseph is traditionally believed to have come to Kerala. Moreover there was no *catholicos* in Persia at that time. As for Sabrisho and Aphrod, who came to India by the 9th century, it is impossible to believe that they were sent by such a person as an 'Orthodox' Catholicos, except if the term 'orthodox' is applied to the supreme head of the so-called Nestorian Church, better known as the Church of the East, to whose jurisdiction both the above mentioned bishops clearly belonged. Pp. 36-37, the council of Nicaea never confirmed any *catholicos*. P. 40, from all available sources the ways of worship of the Thomas Christians before 1500 were exclusively East Syrian, i.e. 'Nestorian', and not West Syrian, i.e. 'Jacobite'. Pp. 54-58, Aithallah, who unwillingly occasioned the Coonan cross oath and revolt among the Thomas Christians, was a former Syrian Orthodox prelate, who had accepted communion with Rome; he died later on in Paris. P. 59, Alexander Palliparambil, the first local bishop of Kerala, did not take the 'title' of 'de Campo', but this was the Portuguese translation of his house-name. To entitle the same event as 'First Schism Romo-Syrian, 1663' is not only ecumenically in poor taste, but historically unfounded, since the majority of the Thomas Christians who had revolted in 1553 against their Portuguese masters had sided with the Discalced Carmelites who had been sent by Rome to Kerala to restore peace there; their union with Rome was firmly established in the 16th century. P. 64, Antyaka, the small provincial town of S. Turkey, which is the same as the great Antioch of old, is neither ruined nor desolated, though it contains many ruins of its former glory. P. 101, the small parish of Brahmawar in S. Kanara is an ex-Latin church which about 85 years ago joined the Syrian Orthodox Church while remaining Latin in everything else; even today the old Roman Mass in Latin is used there, of course without 'epiclesis', by the parish priest who often happens to be of more ancient Orthodox origin and from Kerala. The statistics on the Eastern Churches in Appendix I are welcome, though marred by much inaccuracy.

Several legends have been kept without a wink: the historicity of the Acts of St Thomas (p. 4), the correspondence between King Abgar and Jesus (pp. 34-35), a patriarchate for Antioch and even for Jerusalem before the 4th/5th centuries. Nowhere does the author mention the problem which arises from the multiplication of patriarchs bearing the title of Antioch, three of whom are in communion with Rome. As regards the story of Caliph Omar being responsible for the burning of the famed Alexandrian library (p. 49), it is also a legend.

The list of mistatements, inaccuracies, and historical errors could be lengthened. Fortunately the modern history of the Orthodox Church in India (pp. 74 ff), with few exceptions, is much more reliable. Actually it is due to a great extent not only to the personal acquaintance of the author with men and events, but also to having consulted

several Malayalam works on the recent times. His description of the Church today (pp. 149-63) is also a welcome addition to the literature existing on the subject.

The get-up of the book is more than satisfactory under our present conditions, though it is unfortunately marred by a number of misprints, especially of foreign names.

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Revolution in Rome: by DAVID F. WELLS. Tyndale Press, London 1973.
Pp. 128. Price £ 1.10 (cloth), 60p (paperback).

Wells' intention in writing this book about contemporary Catholicism is to appraise both Protestants and Catholics of the revolutionary changes that have come over Catholicism in the last few decades. Wells is convinced that most of what 'appear to be brilliantly fresh and innovative' in progressive Catholicism can be traced back to 19th century liberal Protestantism, even though 'progressive Catholics are largely unaware of their liberal Protestant stepbrothers' (p. 10). Wells' excuse for venturing into an analysis of the formidably complex phenomenon of contemporary Catholicism is his belief that his greater acquaintance (as Protestant) with the ideas of the liberal tradition in his own confession and his longer reflection on them 'can give him an edge in analysing contemporary Catholic thought', but for this conviction he 'would have joined the angels in balking at such a project'.

Who speaks for contemporary Catholicism? After much reflection, Wells decides to base his study on the documents of Vatican II and their interpretation by the majority of progressive theologians. The main issues of contemporary Catholic thinking are: 'Authority: Inward or Outward?' (Ch. 3), 'God: In the Earthly or the Heavenly City?' (Ch. 4), 'Christianity: A Broad or Narrow Definition?' (Ch. 5), 'The Church: The People or the Pope?' (Ch. 6). Wells' benevolent and cautious prognosis for Catholicism is:

With the passage of time the most radical may leave the Church, the most conservative may die and the laity may repudiate its more liberal suitors. The Roman Church would seem to be able to pursue effectively the policy which Pope Paul evidently wants for it now: a respectful hold on traditional faith, an openness for a moderately progressive outlook and a radical approach to social problems (p. 100).

The book concludes with a view 'Into the Morrow' (Ch. 7) in the context of the *Oicumene*, and an Appendix on 'Mary: An Unresolved Problem'.

This (Catholic) reviewer feels happy at the sympathetic interest that contemporary Catholicism has evoked in a Protestant Professor of Church History and the History of Christian Thought. I cannot but appreciate the correctness of the author's judgment in making the documents of Vatican II the basis of his study and interpreting

them under the guidance of the more progressive Catholic theologians. Hopefully, too, Wells' prognosis for Catholicism will be correct. While I am happy about all this, on the other hand I am not sure that Wells understands what contemporary Catholicism really is. It seems to me that Wells discovers too much liberal Protestantism in the Catholic progressives. Whether Küng or Rahner (both of whom Wells would gladly call liberal Protestants; see footnote on p. 69f.) or whoever it be, what in my view clearly marks off the Catholic progressive from the liberal Protestant is his unreserved adherence to the faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, as the New Testament teaches and the early Councils have defined it. Neither does Wells seem to be correct in presenting the problematic of contemporary Catholicism in terms of his alternatives. I do not believe that the issue for the Catholic progressive consists in such Either-Or. The progressives (except for the *ultras*, of course) accept all that the conservatives do, only with a difference, which by no means amounts (at least in their minds) to a rejection or compromising of what they accept. One also feels somewhat sad that Wells spots nothing in contemporary Catholicism that could be of value to the Protestants by way of either inspiration or challenge. One nostalgically thinks of Karl Barth's famous call to the Protestant Churches in his *Thoughts on the Second Vatican Council*.

To me the most disappointing part of the book is the Appendix on Mary. It is not that I am perfectly at ease regarding the Marian cult and Mariology of contemporary Catholicism. But I am afraid that in interpreting the Council document (here for a change Wells refuses to be guided by any Catholic interpretation) Wells both loses his equanimity and offends against fairness. To quote the Karl Barth of the *Church Dogmatics*, Vol. I in criticism of Catholic Mariology in 1973 is, to say the least, anachronistic. For it was the same Barth, who had written in 1932: 'In the doctrine and worship of Mary there is disclosed the one heresy of the Roman Catholic Church which explains all the rest' (Wells, p. 118), who also wrote three and a half decades later: 'The Catholic Church does not stand or fall (thank God) on its Mariology' (*Ad Limina Apostolorum*, 1967). Wells has wasted his time and that of his reader in attempting to refute the 'Catholic' reading of Gen 3:15. I have yet to come across a Catholic translation of the Bible of the last two decades which still keeps the Vulgate-Douay-Rhims 'she'. As for Mariology itself, while I am not inclined to contest that there possibly still lingers some sort of crypto-Mariolatry in the Catholic Church, I am also unhappy that Wells (along with many of our Protestant brothers) seems to suffer from a certain Mariophobia. When shall we have a common statement on this humble handmaiden of the Lord that will restore her to that place in the Church's theology and life which the Scriptures clearly assign to her?

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